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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 000735

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PETRAEUS DISCUSSES IRAQ SECURITY, KUWAIT-IRAQ  
RELATIONS WITH AMIR

REF: A. KUWAIT 701 B. KUWAIT 148 C. KUWAIT 77

Classified By: Ambassador Deborah K. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During his June 25 visit to Kuwait, Gen. Petraeus, accompanied by the Ambassador met with the Amir and Crown Prince (together) and had a separate meeting with the PM, MinDef and FM. At both meetings Gen. Petraeus briefed on the current security situation in Iraq and asked for assistance in cutting off funding for and stemming the flow of foreign fighters from Syria. The Amir stated that Syria is ready for dialogue with Arab countries and suggested the U.S. begin a dialogue as well. The Amir expressed satisfaction that Maliki's visit to Tehran was "not successful" and said he was happy that Iran demonstrated it did not regard Iraq as a friend. The Amir told Gen. Petraeus that the GOK was waiting for project proposals from the GOI in order to spend the USD 60 million the GOK has already released, asking Gen. Petraeus to urge Maliki to "tell us what they want." During the meeting with the PM, MinDef and FM, the PM and FM inquired about the status of the Iraqi Army and expressed concern over continued oil smuggling to neighboring countries. Gen. Petraeus specifically pressed the issue of Kuwaiti links to funding of foreign fighter networks in Syria; however, the PM did not address the issue directly. Prior to the meetings, the Kuwait Armed Forces Chief of Staff directly requested that Gen. Petraeus not raise Kuwaiti funding of terrorist elements directly with the Amir, suggesting this remains an extremely sensitive topic. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Commanding General MNF-I, David Petraeus, accompanied by the Ambassador, met June 25 with the Amir, Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah and the Crown Prince, Shaykh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah. Following the Amir's meeting, Gen. Petraeus had a combined meeting with the Prime Minister (PM), Shaykh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Shaykh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (FM), Shaykh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al Sabah. In both meetings, Gen. Petraeus provided comprehensive overviews of recent progress in Iraq and the improving security situation, while cautioning that significant challenges remain. Gen. Petraeus urged greater Kuwaiti engagement, including the permanent posting of their Ambassador to Baghdad.

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AMIR: THE U.S. SHOULD ENGAGE WITH SYRIA  
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¶3. (C) Reiterating points made during his previous meeting with the Amir in February (Ref B), Gen. Petraeus asked the Amir to use Kuwait's influence over Syria to encourage the SARG to distance itself from Iran and to be more vigilant about stopping the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq. The Amir responded that was "Syria is now ready for good relations with Arab countries," adding he hoped the U.S. would begin a dialogue with Syria as well.

¶4. (C) The Amir noted in the decline violence, successes in Basrah and Sadr City and the current operation in Maysan. He said it appeared foreign fighters had left Iraq to fight in Afghanistan, after referring obliquely to Abdullah Saleh Al-Ajmi (Kuwaiti former Guantanamo detainee) who went through Syria to Iraq and reportedly carried out a suicide attack in Mosul in late April.

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IRAN SHOWS IT IS NOT IRAQ,S FRIEND  
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¶5. (C) On Iran, the Amir said he was happy Maliki's visit to Tehran was "not successful" and that "Iran did not look at Iraq as a friend." Gen. Petraeus stressed that it was a crucial time for Iraq's Arab neighbors to reinforce Iraq's Arab identity to counter increased Iranian influence. The Amir indicated that the decreasing Iranian influence and progress on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict (which he said played an important role in what would happen in Iraq) made him very optimistic about Iraq's future. The Amir stated "we are optimistic Iraq will come out of this dark tunnel very soon."

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KUWAITI AID TO IRAQ AND EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS  
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¶6. (C) The Amir discussed Kuwait's USD 500 million pledge to Iraq and the already dispersed USD 60 million (Ref C). He stated the USD 60 million that has been transferred (from the

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GOK to the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development) was to be used for hospitals and schools but "has not been touched."

The Amir asserted that the GOK would never give cash to the GOI, although he noted they have never requested cash, because "it would not help them right now." The Amir asked Gen. Petraeus to urge Maliki to develop projects for the money, stating "they have to tell us what they want and we will do it."

¶7. (C) Gen. Petraeus asked when a Kuwaiti Ambassador would be sent to Iraq. The Amir reiterated that the GOK had named their Ambassador, Gen. (Ret) Ali Al-Mo'min, and was waiting (per an agreement with the GOI) for the Iraqis to name theirs before sending Al-Mo'min to Baghdad. Gen. Petraeus explained that negotiations had recently concluded between the GOI and Tawafaq for the inclusion of the Sunni coalition in the government, and because of this he expected ministers and ambassadors to be appointed soon.

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STRENGTHENING KUWAIT-IRAQ RELATIONS  
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¶8. (C) The Amir stated that "we have good relations with all Iraqis, Sunni and Shia" and told Gen. Petraeus that he had met the previous day with Shaykh Ahmad Abu Risha (Iraqi Sahwa (Awakening) Congress leader) and his delegation. He said that the Awakening Councils have helped stabilize Iraq, and appealed to Gen. Petraeus to urge Maliki to "be just and fair with all groups." The Amir noted that Maliki's last visit to Kuwait in April was encouraging and helped to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

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PM, FM CONCERNS: IA REFORM, OIL SMUGGLING  
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¶9. (C) In a follow-on meeting, the PM remarked that "we see the internal security getting better and better"; however, things tend to go well for a period of time in Iraq and then "something explodes" and the situation deteriorates. He expressed hope that the situation would stabilize quickly so

that Iraq could begin to enjoy economic prosperity. The PM also told Gen. Petraeus that he congratulated PM Nouri Al-Maliki during his visit in April on the well trained ("by the U.S.") Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) that are now helping to secure Iraq.

¶10. (C) Both the PM and the FM were especially interested in the current status of the IA and inquired about the size of the armed forces, Iraqi military equipment and capabilities and asked if both the IA and ISF were becoming more inclusive in terms of incorporating former Baathists and Kurds. Gen. Petraeus responded affirmatively and added that two of the four four-star generals in Iraq were former Baathists and that there were a number of high-ranking Kurds in the IA and ISF; he also briefed on the current capacity of the IA. The FM sought details regarding ongoing sectarian feuding in Baghdad and how Iraqi and U.S. troops were managing it.

¶11. (C) The FM inquired about the continued level of smuggling, specifically oil smuggling, occurring in Iraq. Both the PM and FM voiced concern that too much Iraqi oil was being smuggled out of the country to neighboring Jordan and Syria. The PM shared a rumor he heard that the GOI was investing its budget surplus in the U.S. Gen. Petraeus said that the GOI has improved its ability to spend all of its budget during the fiscal year and denied that any surplus was being invested in the U.S.

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FUNDING FOREIGN FIGHTERS  
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¶12. (C) Gen. Petraeus pressed the issue of Kuwaiti links to the funding of the foreign fighter network in Syria (Abu Ghadiya) and asked for GOK support to cut off the funding. The PM deflected Gen. Petraeus' several assertions by questioning how Al-Qaeda could receive funding without being detected.

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COMMENT  
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¶13. (C) Gen. Petraeus and delegation were met prior to the meetings by the Chief of Staff (COS), LTG Fahed Al-Amir who accompanied the delegation to both meetings. LTG Al-Amir inquired beforehand about the topics that the General planned to raise and specifically asked that Gen. Petraeus not raise with the Amir our concerns regarding Kuwaiti sources of

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funding for terrorist elements. This is clearly an extremely sensitive topic for the Amir, who remains frustrated by his inability to spring the four remaining Kuwaitis in Guantanamo. While his traditional strong pitch for their immediate transfer has been tempered by embarrassment over the reported suicide bombings in Mosul, we understand from sources close to the Amir that he was disturbed by the contents of the President's June 6 letter (delivered via the PM, by APHSCT Ken Wainstein earlier this month).

¶14. (U) U.S. Participants:

Ambassador Deborah K. Jones  
Commanding General, MNF-I, Gen. David Petraeus  
Commanding General, ARCENT, LTG James Lovelace  
Chief, Office of Military Cooperation - Kuwait, BGen Charles Hudson  
Chief, Commander's Initiative Group, MNF-I, COL Michael Bell  
Cultural Advisor, Sadi Othman

¶15. (U) This cable was not cleared by Gen. Petraeus.

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JONES